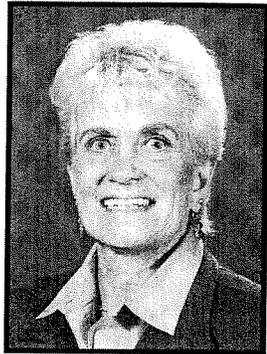


Hammerstrom's

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SENATE PASSES MEASURES TO FILL GAP IN 2003 SCHOOL AID FUND. The Senate has now passed a bill ensuring that Michigan's public schools are not forced to shoulder the \$92 million projected shortfall in the School Aid Fund. Figures released from the May Consensus Revenue Estimating Conference, held at the State Capitol on May 13, show a nearly \$92 million budget shortfall in the 2003 School Aid Fund. Senate Bill 183, which passed the Senate by a unanimous vote, transfers \$61 million from the general fund into the state School Aid Fund. The approximately \$31 million remaining shortfall will be handled by the refinancing of existing bonds. Senate Bill 183 is now in the House Appropriations Committee, awaiting further consideration. Additional information discussed at the May conference included state revenues collected since January, a picture of the state and national economy, and the impact of revenue collections in the 2003 and 2004 fiscal years.

REPUBLICANS INTRODUCE DRIVER RESPONSIBILITY PROGRAM. Michigan's habitually bad drivers will have to pay higher fees to keep their driving privileges

and to compensate for the danger they create on state roads under legislation introduced at a recent press conference. According to the "Driver Responsibility Program," a driver who racks up seven or more points in a two-year period will be charged with a \$100 financial assessment, and \$50 for each additional point above seven points. The legislation is based on a recent newspaper report revealing one in six traffic deaths in Michigan involve a driver with multiple traffic violations. In addition, data from the National Highway Safety Administration shows that, between 1994 and 2001, Michigan ranked fourth in the nation in the percentage of crash deaths involving drivers with bad records. Similar programs have been introduced in states such as New Jersey with overwhelming success.

PUBLIC HEARINGS ON OUT-OF-STATE WASTE ANNOUNCED. A series of public hearings intended to allow Michigan residents the opportunity to voice their concerns about the persistent problem of out-of-state waste have been announced by the Senate Majority Leader and Speaker of the House. The hearings are being conducted jointly by the Senate Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee and the House Land Use and Environment Committee. Since January 1, 2003, more than 25 bills or resolutions have been introduced in the Michigan Legislature that would regulate the flow of waste from other states and Canada into Michigan landfills. The joint hearings are intended to take testimony from residents and interested parties on the legislation, and to hear other ideas on how to address the issue. The first hearing took place May 21 at 6:30 p.m. on the campus of Oakland University. The two remaining meetings are scheduled for May 28 at 6:30 p.m. in Northville at Meads Mill Middle School, and June 3 at 8:00 a.m. in Lansing in the Boji Tower Senate Hearing Room.

AQUIFER PROTECTION BILL PASSES SENATE. The Michigan Senate has recently taken the first step in developing a long-term groundwater protection plan by passing Senate Bill 289. The bill would require the Department of Environmental Quality to determine and map Michigan's water resources in need of protection. The legislation will also provide Michigan with comprehensive data on water use, create an advisory council, and implement a conflict resolution program to settle disputes involving large-volume water withdrawals. SB 289 passed unanimously, and is now in the House Committee on Land Use and Environment. The bill is based on the recommendations of the Great Lakes Conservation Task Force, a committee on which I served during the last session.

DID YOU KNOW? The name Michigan comes from the Chippewa word majigan, which means "clearing," inspired by a clearing on the west side of the lower peninsula.